

High-risk drugs and the elderly

As we age, drugs can affect us differently. That's why the American Geriatrics Society recommends older Americans avoid the following medications. If you or a loved one is 65 or older, talk to a doctor about getting a different, potentially safer drug.

Drug type	Drug name(s)	May be unsafe because ...
Sleep aids	Ambien®, Lunesta®, Sonata®	Sleep doesn't improve and side effects can cause confusion and falls
Thyroid treatment	Armour®	May harm patients with heart problems – safer medications are available
Estrogens (w/ or w/o progestins)	Estradiol, Estratest®, Premarin®, Prempro®	Can increase the risk of breast and uterine cancer. Avoid pills and patches. Vaginal cream can be used at low doses to help symptoms.
Diabetes treatments (Long-acting sulfonylureas)	Glyburide, Chlorpropamide	Can cause low blood sugar
Allergies, cold treatments (Antihistamines)	Benadryl®, Chlorpheniramine, Doxylamine, Hydroxyzine	Can cause confusion, drowsiness, blurred vision and constipation
Muscle relaxers	Flexeril®, Soma®, Robaxin®, Skelaxin®	Can cause confusion, drowsiness, weakness and urinary retention

New breast cancer screening benefit for eligible HealthPlus commercial HMO members

HealthPlus now offers MRI screening of the breast as an option for women who have commercial HealthPlus HMO coverage and meet specifically defined criteria. While breast mammography is the recognized standard of care for breast cancer screening, current studies reflect that women with dense breast tissue are at an increased risk of developing breast cancer and accurate results may not always be obtainable through the use of traditional breast cancer screenings, such as mammogram.

An MRI screening of the breast does not take the place of a screening mammogram – it is covered in conjunction with a screening mammogram for women who meet the following criteria:

- You must be between 40-80 years of age and have 50 percent or greater fibro glandular tissue by volume, as reported by a mammogram in the last 15 months.
- Screening MRI must be done in conjunction with, or scheduled within 30 days after, the routine screening breast mammogram.
- Screening MRI must be scheduled within the first 10 days of your menstrual cycle, unless you're menopausal.

Speak with your primary care physician about medical tests that are right for you. For more information, contact the HealthPlus customer service department at 800-332-9161 to verify eligibility, benefits and applicable co-pays or deductibles.

Online health seminars available 24/7 – Have you checked them out?

Interested in learning more about organic foods? How about keeping your skin healthy? As a HealthPlus member, you have access to online seminars on these topics and more throughout the year. Upcoming seminar topics include ...

March – Going organic

Separate fact from fiction in this increasingly popular food choice.

April – Fat or fit?

Slender doesn't necessarily mean fit – learn about the importance of exercise at any size.

May – Understanding arthritis

Arthritis is common and painful – get the tips you need to help manage it. Login to healthplus.org to access these seminars and other great health tools from HealthPlus.

Three reasons colorectal cancer screening is important!

1. Colorectal cancer, a leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S., rarely causes symptoms in its early stages.
2. Through screening, it can be found in its early stages. When it's removed early, the chances for a full recovery are very good.
3. Your risk of having or getting it increases if you are 50 years of age or older or if you have ...
 - A family or personal history of colon cancer
 - A personal history of colon polyps, Crohn's disease or colitis

Talk to your doctor about screening – it could save your life!